[12 cont.]

369 178 [584] [581] [562] always temporary marriages, so great is the attachment of the Saint-Louis man for his city and for the girls of his city. Although this situation is very unfortunate for the boys, it is less so for the girls. Although some of them are still sacrificed very young to rich old men, many wait to meet the young man of their choice before marrying. The marriages of infant girls have become very rare: the girls of Saint-Louis now marry at a [582] reasonable age, at about 20, much like French girls. It is a profound change. Convinced of being obliged to wait a long 369 178 562 time for a husband, they are acquiring an independence that their mothers have not known; they go out, they go to dances where they dance European dances, they dare to sit at a table [191] in a café, they dress according to their taste, they speak French. They go to school without constraint, which is also a revolution, and they, like the boys, look for a salaried position, which allows them a very broad life, like single persons, and which, within the household, frees them from the guardianship of the [595] husband. Polygamy, which the modern [évoluées] women generally refuse, is more and more rare in Saint-Louis (4).

> 4. A polygamous husband most often shuns the modern women for the sake of peace in his household, because the personal earnings of these women permit them to buy finery other than that which he periodi- [578] cally distributes to his spouses, and this provokes jealousy and quarrels. Recently a young female official was supposed to enter the home of a Saint-Louis official as the third or fourth wife. She opposed her parents and married according to her inclination.

Educated girls have long been judged quite harshly, but this is passing. Many of the young girls who married against the wishes of their parents have been quickly forgiven when the latter saw the good appearance of the household and the affluence

ST. Louis

[12 cont.]

369 178 562 [511] that [13] prevailed there. This has been made obvious by the war; the modern households have suffered from economic difficulties much less than the others, because the women proved to be much more skillful in getting out of difficulties with the little that could be obtained.

369 581 [556] Will the custom of such sumptuous expenses with regard to marriage last? It is difficult to tell. It evidently greatly satisfies the pride of the man of Saint-Louis by exhibiting his wealth and his generosity. If it makes marriage difficult for young people, this is very regrettable, because the precious years of youth are lost and the children will come too late; it makes marriage the great affair of one's life, which is good, [564] and it has contributed in a very large measure to the freeing of the girls, which, except for some extravagances, is a great benefit.

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